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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001850

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO/T, NEA/IAI, INL/C/CJ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10-27-13

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SNAR](#) [CE](#) [CB](#) [MG](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: Colombo Plan: Action Request regarding
upcoming Special Session

Refs: (A) Colombo 768
- (B) Colombo 559
- (C) 02 Colombo 1412 (All Notal)

(U) Classified by Charge' d'Affaires James F. Entwistle.
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (U) This is an ACTION REQUEST -- please see Para
Four.

2. (SBU) BACKGROUND: Poloff attended a September 16
Colombo Plan meeting to discuss the postponed biennial
Consultative Committee Meeting (CCM) of the Colombo Plan
(CCM) (the CCM is the highest level meeting of the
Colombo Plan). The CCM was originally scheduled to be
held in Tehran in April 2003, but was put off due to the
Iraq conflict. In early September, the Iranian
government informed the Colombo Plan Secretariat that it
would be unable to host the CCM until sometime after
April 2004. In order to deal with several pressing
matters, the Secretariat decided that the organization
would hold a Special (ambassadorial-level) Session of
the Council on November 18, 2003, in Colombo.

3. (C) The Special Session on November 18 is slated to
review several agenda items, including:

-- CCM Scheduling: When and where to hold the postponed
April 2003 CCM will be the major agenda topic. Kittipan
Kanjapipatkul, Colombo Plan Secretary General, is
visiting Tehran from October 24-29 to discuss the matter
with the Iranian government. Tay Bian How, Drug
Advisory Program Director, told us on October 24 that
Kanjapipatkul intends to present two options to Iran:
(1) Either defer its hosting of a CCM until some time in
the future and allow Bhutan -- which offered to host the
next CCM in 2005 -- to host the next CCM; or (2) set a
date for Tehran to host the next CCM in the coming
months. It is not clear what decision Iran will make
regarding these two options, nor whether it will have
its response ready by the time of the November 18
Special Session.

-- New Members?: The question of whether Mongolia and
Vietnam should be given full membership in the Colombo
Plan Council will be another key agenda item.
Currently, both states are associate members, but have
recently expressed interest in becoming full members.

-- Cambodia's Dues: Whether Cambodia, at its request,
should be forgiven its unpaid dues (roughly USD
260,000), dating from 1978 to the present. (Note: In
1979, the council wrote off Cambodia's unpaid dues from
1973-1977.) Currently, Cambodia continues to
participate and receive the full benefits of Colombo
Plan membership, although it is not paying its dues.
END BACKGROUND.

4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: For the Special Session,
Mission would like to know how to respond to the
rescheduling of the 2003 CCM, including which venue
(Tehran or Bhutan) we would support, and whether or not
we would participate. (Note: Based on past guidance
regarding the April 2003 CCM, we assume that the U.S.
would not participate in any meeting held in Iran, but
that we would not try to block Iran as a venue.)
Mission also requests guidance on whether we should
support full membership for Mongolia and Vietnam, as
well as the request by Cambodia for forgiveness of its
membership arrears. As members will almost certainly be
asked to vote on these issues via a show of hands,
Mission requests Department's guidance before the
Special Session meets on November 18. END ACTION
REQUEST.

5. (U) Minimize considered.

ENTWISTLE